



United States Department of Agriculture

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline

Surveying of National Forest System Lands

Q. 1: Does allowing surveys mean that the Mountain Valley Pipeline will be built on National Forest System lands?

A. 1: No. Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC is proposing to conduct feasibility studies, including routing, environmental, cultural resource, and civil surveys, within a study corridor along a 2-mile segment of a proposed natural gas pipeline route located on the Jefferson National Forest. A Forest Service decision on whether to allow the actual construction of a pipeline across National Forest System lands would be based on the results of an in-depth environmental study conducted by the lead agency, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Q2: What is Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC proposing to survey?

A2: Routing and associated environmental, cultural resources, and other potential impacts of proposed pipeline development. Please see specific information on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests website's "Mountain Valley Pipeline" webpage at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/>

Q3: Can I get a map of the survey corridor for National Forest System lands?

A3: Yes. It is on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests website:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/>



Forest Service

Date: January 21, 2015



Q4: What happens if the Forest Service does not issue a permit for the surveys?

A4: The proponent would continue the pre-filing process with the FERC and ultimately file a pipeline right-of-way application. Information gathered from these surveys would inform the Forest Service and the public early in the FERC process of important resources on the Jefferson National Forest located in the proposed pipeline corridor. This information would help with future decisions on whether to allow the construction, operation, and maintenance of the pipeline on National Forest System lands.

Q5: When will the Forest Service decide whether to issue the survey permit?

A5: We hope to make a decision on whether to issue a permit for surveys on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forest in mid-March 2015.

Q6: What happens if something is found on the survey? Will Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC be able to build the pipeline?

A6: The surveys are being conducted in order to find valuable environmental and cultural resources on National Forest System lands within the survey corridor. The resource values found on the national forest during this survey process plays an important role in developing alternatives to be studied in-depth during the FERC process. The information gathered from the surveys will also play a vital role in the Forest Service's decision-making process on whether to allow construction of a pipeline across national forest.

Q7: Did the Forest Service determine the route of the proposed pipeline on national forest lands?

A7: No. Upon request, the Forest Service provided publicly available data on the resources of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests to the proponent. The proponent ultimately proposes the route and the Forest Service makes a decision on whether to approve a particular route across National Forest System lands.





Q8: Could the route change from what was identified in the survey application?

A8: Yes. It could change based on results found in the survey, which could range from infeasibility to construct the pipeline in a specific location to the identification of sensitive environmental or cultural resources.

Q9: On what basis did the Forest Service accept the survey application?

A9: Screening criteria found at 36 CFR 251.54(e).

Q10: Can the Forest Service make Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC co-locate the pipeline with existing road or utility corridors?

A10: Yes, but it is too early to make this determination. The Forest Service will work through the FERC process of evaluating the application and alternatives to the proposed location. Colocation with existing corridors is desirable according to the Forest Plan, but is dependent upon the feasibility of colocation and the impacts of the specific location.

Q11: What is a temporary permit?

A11: A special-use authorization issued for a term of one year or less.

Q12: Are the taxpayers paying for this?

A12: The agency is recovering the costs associated with processing the survey application and monitoring an authorization, if granted, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 251.58. The applicant will pay these costs under a cost-recovery agreement.





Q13: What are the next steps for National Forest System lands?

A13: Public submits comments or concerns related specifically to the activities proposed to be conducted under the survey permit to the Forest Service. Based on the comments and environmental review of the impacts of the survey activities, the Forest Service will determine whether to issue a temporary special-use permit to conduct surveys. If the survey permit is issued, Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC will conduct the surveys over the next year.

See also Q16.

Q14: What is the Forest Service role in the pipeline?

A14: Initially we work with the proponent to provide information on sensitive environmental and cultural resources on National Forest System lands. We also outline the permitting process and requirements.

Pipeline companies typically ask permission from landowners to enter their property to conduct survey activities. When asking for permission to use National Forest System lands, pipeline companies first submit a proposal. When the Forest Service receives the proposal, we do an initial screening to determine if the proposal can be accepted as a formal application. If the proposal meets all of the screening criteria found at 36 CFR 251.54(e), then a formal application is accepted and processed. Processing includes conducting an appropriate level of environmental analysis, public involvement, and coordination with other agencies that may have a regulatory role over the proposed activities or use, and other actions deemed necessary to make an informed decision on whether or not to grant the use of National Forest System lands for that particular purpose, which in this case is surveying. If a decision is made to grant the use of National Forest System lands for survey purposes, then the Forest Service's permission comes in the form of a temporary special-use permit.

If a permit is issued, then Forest Service resource specialists would coordinate, review, and monitor the surveys and the survey results. The Forest Service would also work with the FERC during FERC's pre-filing process.





If the proponent decides to file a formal application with the FERC, Forest Service and other government land-holding agencies will be considered cooperating agencies and FERC is the lead agency. FERC conducts the public involvement and prepares the Environmental Impact Statement associated with the proposed pipeline. As a cooperating agency, the Forest Service would review the public comments to FERC to ensure that concerns and issues raised regarding National Forest System lands are being addressed and ensure the sections of the environmental analysis covering National Forest System lands meets the laws and regulations that direct the management of national forests.

If the FERC approves the pipeline, then the Forest Service makes our own decision on whether to allow construction, operation, and maintenance of the pipeline on National Forest System lands. This decision will be made based on the public comments and environmental analysis conducted by the FERC. If the Forest Service decided to allow the pipeline, a right-of-way special-use permit would be issued.

Q15: Who makes the decision on whether to allow construction of this pipeline?

A15: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) makes the decision to allow pipelines on private land. The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other federal land management agencies make their own decision on whether to allow a pipeline to cross federal lands under their jurisdiction.

Q16: Who makes the decision on whether to allow a pipeline to cross private lands?

A16: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Q17: Who makes the decision on allowing a pipeline to cross National Park Service lands?

A17: This question should be directed to the National Park Service.





Q18: Can the Forest Service stop the construction of the pipeline?

A18: No. The Forest Service only has authority to make decisions on National Forest System lands.

Q19: Why would the Forest Service even consider allowing a pipeline across the national forest?

A19: The laws governing the management of the national forests stipulate that the national forests play a role in energy generation and transmission. The Forest Service will follow all laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to issuing permits for natural gas transmission pipelines.

Q20: What happens if the Forest Service does not allow the pipeline to be constructed on National Forest System lands?

A20: If the proponent chose to construct the pipeline, then the pipeline would need to be re-routed off National Forest System lands.

Q21: How can I find more information?

A21: More information on the proposed project is available on the following websites:

- George Washington & Jefferson National Forests: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/>
- FERC's "e-library" webpage (search Docket #PF15-3): <http://www.ferc.gov/>
- Mountain Valley Pipeline Project: <http://mountainvalleypipeline.info/>

